

**Women's International League for Peace and Freedom**  
**Ligue internationale des femmes pour la paix et la liberté**  
**Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad**  
**Internationale Frauenliga für Frieden und Freiheit**

*Consultative Status with United Nations ECOSOC, UNCTAD and UNESCO*

*Special Consultative Relations with FAO, ILO and UNICEF*

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### **Submission to Defence Policy Review**

This submission is made on behalf of the Australian Section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).

WILPF welcomes the invitation for community involvement in the current review of Australia's Defence Policy.

**Our stance:** Since its founding Congress in The Hague in 1915 in the midst of the carnage of WW1, WILPF has been working for disarmament, for equality between women and men and among nations, and for world institutions that would provide machinery to prevent emerging conflicts escalating into war. WILPF women seek the transformation by non-violent means from 'a culture of militarism and war to a culture of peace and non-violence'.

It follows that, in regard to Defence policy and practice (as in all policy development), WILPF supports the Australian Government's implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace and Security. As clearly stated by international women's NGOs in their 2008 statement to the Commission for Disarmament: "... without women's equal participation, sustainable peace, sustainable development and true human security are unattainable. Women must be able to contribute their perspectives, help determine policy options, and have a greater say over budgetary allocations".<sup>1</sup>

**Context:** The Discussion paper asks, "what types of security challenges might the future hold? Are armed forces the best way to manage such challenges?"

1. Since, as stated in the Defence Discussion paper (hard copy, p.28), "...we have no indication that any state has the intent to attack Australia..." WILPF agrees with the participants of the Australia 2020 Summit that **the primary threats to our national, regional and global security are climate change, water and energy supply and poverty** and "that a sounder basis for national and regional security lies in the strengthening of international institutions and adherence to the international rule of law, the pursuit of disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament, and a deeper institutional engagement to national and peace building including the implementation of gender equality".<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Report of Women, War, Weapons and Conflict Prevention IWD Seminar, Geneva March 2008

<sup>2</sup> Australia 2020 Summit Report #10.

2. **The choice facing the world is to disarm and cooperate to counter climate change or face planetary disaster.**<sup>3</sup> For Australia, this means that we must review the priority given to military spending and to the nature of our military alliances. We cannot afford to address the emerging complex global situation and support an arms build-up either in our region, or by our allies. With new defence expenditure increases being guaranteed, it is clear that the budget priorities lie with defence. Prioritising defence spending is at the expense of pressing domestic needs such as education, arresting environmental degradation, and indigenous health and housing.<sup>4</sup>
  
3. **Adding to the arms build-up in our region undermines the credibility of our support for international law and encourages distrust on our neighbours' part.** As does Australia's present policy of interoperability with US forces in preparing for 'high intensity' conflict; and our involvement in the US Missile Shield program and its (illegal) moves to militarise space. These programs entrap us in a vicious cycle of ever more costly armament purchases. Together with the support for US intelligence bases in Australia (not mentioned in the Discussion Paper), the present form of our US alliance makes us more vulnerable to both military and terrorist attack and seriously compromises our ability to respond flexibly and independently to such security threats.

**WILPF therefore holds the position that:**

1. Within the diplomatic and strategic context outlined above, the ADF's **core role**, (which includes strong emphases on disarmament and regional cooperation) be to promote peace and stability in our region, by working with the United Nations on peace-support operations as has been done so commendably in East Timor, in addition to basic national defence operations such as coast surveillance.
2. These operations should fully implement UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 relating to women's protection in all situations of violent conflict and their equal involvement with men in all peace processes. In situations where the threat of violent conflict is continuing, military forces should be complemented by a properly trained civilian non-violent force composed of equal numbers of women and men whose mission would be "to intervene and stabilise potential or actual conflicts, and assist communities to develop the patterns of a democratic society with human rights".<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> In 2006 the global military expenditure was \$US 1.2 trillion.

<sup>4</sup> Defence receives special treatment. It has been prioritised to increase in real terms. The 2000 Defence White Paper successfully recommended that the government commit itself to increasing Defence base spending by 3% per annum in real terms to 2010-11. This is very generous treatment given the focus on cutting budgets in other areas (ie Defence has been quarantined from cuts and it initially added \$28.5 billion in resources over the period 2000-2010). In the 2006/07 Budget, the Howard Government extended this commitment to 2015-16. In the first Rudd Government budget, the commitment was extended to 2017-18.

The 2006/07 budget of the Howard Government was the sixth budget since the 2000 Defence White Paper that had met or exceeded the White Paper commitment of 3% increase in real terms. As a result there was a 37% increase in Defence expenditure in real terms since the first Howard Government budget (1995/96-2006/07).

The projected increases in Defence spending (increase of \$39.2B 2000/01-2015/16) is more than 3 times the budget allocated to restore the Darling River Murray System (about \$12B now under Rudd).

In Defence, spending is very similar as a proportion of total government 'expenses' to total education expenditure (university, vocational, schooling) at around \$18B. Education however does not have the same guaranteed real increase in expenditure. If net capital expenditures were included then the budget papers indicate defence spending would be higher than education (partly because of the rapidly depreciating education capital facilities and underfunding of capital expenditure in education).

<sup>5</sup> Submission to Defence Review 2008, David Johnson: *An Australian Non Violent Force*

3. Overall military spending be reduced and these funds be diverted to social and environmental programs; the gender impact of these programs being taken into account:
  - within Australia, to ameliorating climate change and deteriorating river systems, to improving inadequate health, education, transport, housing and social welfare systems;
  - and globally, to averting climate change and environmental degradation,<sup>6</sup> and to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, in particular MDG3 Gender Equality,

Gender equality and women's participation in every aspect of decision-making are seen as essential if climate change and increased environmental degradation (especially due to population increase) are to be averted and human wellbeing fostered.

- 4 Defence policy include serious accounting for **its environmental impact and carbon footprint**: including the impact of researching the mechanisms of war and weapons; mining, manufacture and testing of weapons; the training of military personnel to use weapons<sup>7</sup>, including "war games" maintenance and storage of equipment, storage of dangerous and obsolete weapons; cleaning up unexploded weapons left in war zones: land mines, cluster bombs, depleted Uranium; and restoring destroyed infrastructure, polluted water supplies and land.

**In conclusion:** We agree with the experts on war who were invited to analyse war: military commanders, strategists and academics<sup>8</sup>. Their judgment was unequivocal: war is counterproductive in terms of the goals it seeks to achieve, unpredictable in terms of outcomes, hideously expensive, damaging to the environment, escalating of climate change, and causes unspeakable suffering to human beings, in particular to innocent civilians: "A sounder basis for national and regional security lies in the strengthening of international institutions and adherence to the international rule of law."<sup>9</sup> This should be our national priority.

*Submission prepared by Margaret Bearlin and Margot Pearson  
For Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (Australian Section) Inc.  
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<sup>6</sup> The proposed 100 Joint Strike fighters would cost over \$30 bn, when "costs of meeting the MDGs in all countries are in the order of \$121 billion in 2006, rising to \$189 billion in 2015" UN Millennium Project [http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/costs\\_benefits2.htm](http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/costs_benefits2.htm)

"The total Lockheed Martin Joint Strike Fighter project is on course to become a US \$ 1 trillion, (one million million) project for the anticipated 3,000 aircraft produced through their lifecycle."

*The Canberra Times*, 9 July '08

<sup>7</sup> One hour of fighter bomber training is equivalent to 2 years average motorist's consumption of oil.

<sup>8</sup> Preparing for Peace by asking the experts to analyse war

<[www.preparingforpeace.org.uk](http://www.preparingforpeace.org.uk)>

<sup>9</sup> Conclusions p.43, Preparing for Peace by asking the experts to analyse war